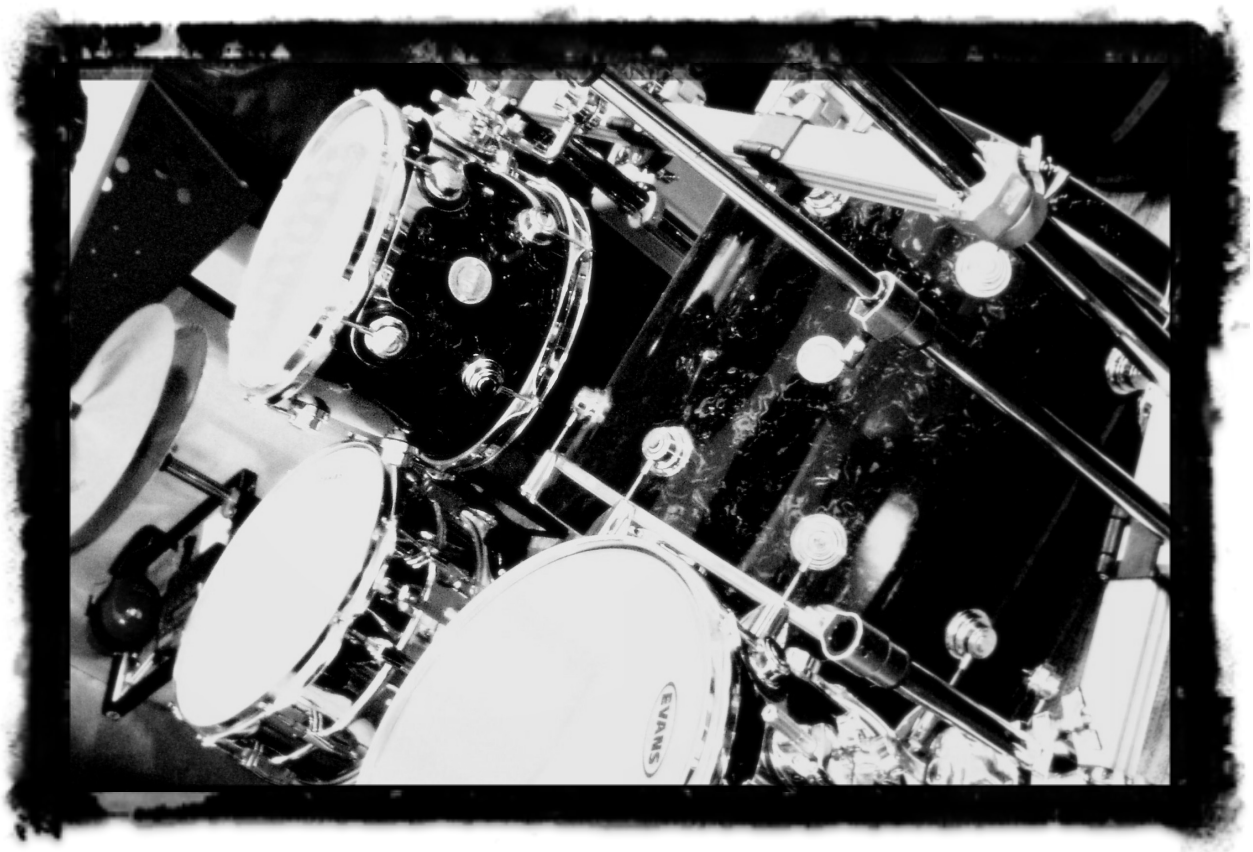


Time Awareness - Vol. 1

Go-Everywhere Exercises to Improve Your Sense of Time



by

Gianpaolo Gallian

To all my fellow musicians

Time Awareness Vol. 1 – Go-Everywhere Exercises to Improve Your Sense of Time
by Gianpaolo Galian

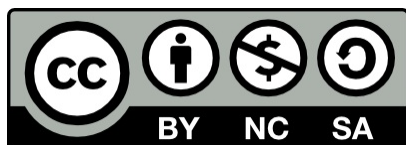
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Introduction

Hello, musicians, and welcome to this book!

During some years spent playing live gigs, practicing, rehearsing music and recording to click tracks I've noticed that one of the most under-estimated aspects of music still remains **time awareness**: it's incredible how many musicians (even some seasoned ones) still have trouble synchronizing to an external source, whether it's a drummer, a click track, a bass line or whatsoever.

This little practice companion (originally conceived as a handout for my students and fellow musicians) will present some exercises that can be practiced no matter what you have at your disposal: for most of them, your instrument isn't even necessary, since you will need just your voice, your hands and thighs. Hence the concept of **GEEs: Go-Everywhere Exercises**.

Before we start, let me credit some people that have helped me raising my time awareness and collecting/building some of the material presented herein: first of all Mr. Gary Chaffee, that with his "Patterns" series has introduced me to the world of polyrhythms; then, Mr. Benny Greb, from whom I borrowed "The Alphabet of Drumming" and some exercises that I tried to stretch and expand where possible; then, Mr. Jasper Blom for his inspiring suggestions about practicing creatively with a click, and finally to my teacher Mr. Massimo Morganti for showing me some really intriguing exercises that set my mind going, definitely.

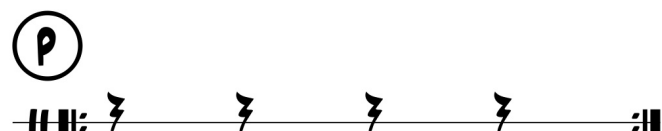
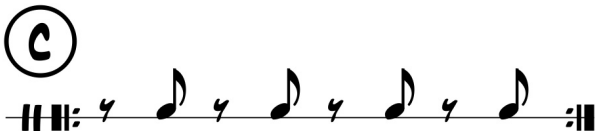
I have included a list of suggested material at the end in case you wanted to get deeper in the subject of **time awareness**, that is rapidly becoming a non-second matter of study to subjects like ear training and the kind.

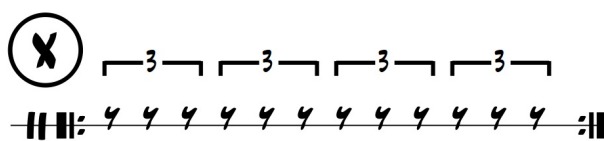
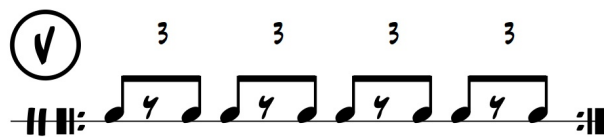
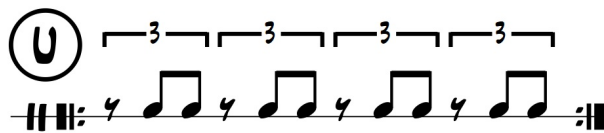
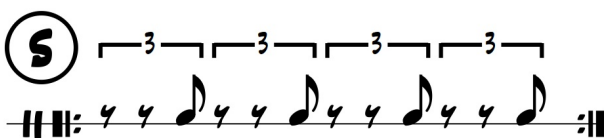
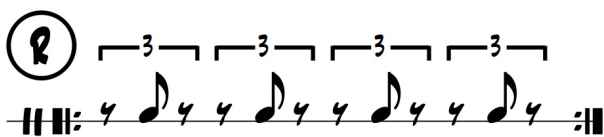
I hope this exercises will help you out in building a stronger, solid rhythmic foundation in both your listening and playing.

For now practice, and have fun!!

The Alphabet of Rhythm

– from Benny Greb's "The Language of Drumming" –





Preliminary Exercises

Exercise 1

With a loop of subdivisions in your head, clap the rhythm of each letter of the alphabet with your hands. Repeat each letter till comfortable, then move on.

Exercise 2

Keep a short "chid" sound with your voice on **quarter notes**, while clapping the rhythm of each letter with your hands. Repeat each letter till comfortable, then move on.

The loud, super-short "chid" sound is very important: play it loud, or it won't work!

If you have trouble playing the alphabet as indicated above, check out the problematic letters separately at first.

Exercise 3

Start mixing different letters and build your own musical phrases

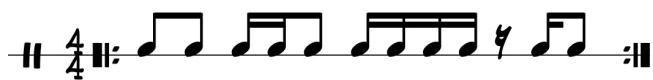
Try these, for example:



A 3/2 Son Clave (although the original is commonly written over two bars)



A 3/2 Rhumba Clave (again, the original is commonly written over two bars)



This is also known as The "Football" Clave (really, try it again!!)

The point is, before you start to synchronize to an external source (like a metronome, or a fellow musician), you have to feel the pulse (quarter-note, in this case), parallel to what you're playing.

Before moving on, be sure to be able to play all the previous exercises perfectly.

Record yourself and listen back: how good is your timing?

Body Exercises

TIME CHECK

Play the alphabet with one hand on your thigh, keeping the "chid" sound with your voice as before. Repeat each letter till comfortable, then move on. Then, switch hand and thigh. Then repeat with both feet, one at a time. When playing with your feet, keep your heels down and stay relaxed, all the time!

Instrumental Exercises

IMPROVISATION / GROOVE / MELODY

Exercise 1

Sing the "chid" on the quarter-note downbeat: improvise, or play a groove/melody over it. Singers: clap your hands instead of saying "chid", and use your voice to improvise.

Exercise 2

Sing the "chid" on the eighth-note offbeats ("and"): the rest as above.

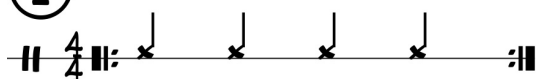
Exercise 3

Sing the "chid" on the sixteenth-note offbeats, first on the second sixteenth (or "e"), then on the fourth (or "ah"): the rest as above. Try with triplet offbeats, also!

MOVING CLICK

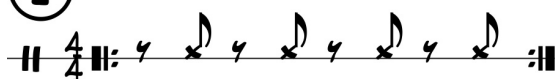
Sing something, play a groove or improvise while hearing the click on:

①



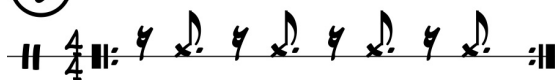
1. Quarter-note downbeat

②



2. Eighth-note offbeat

③



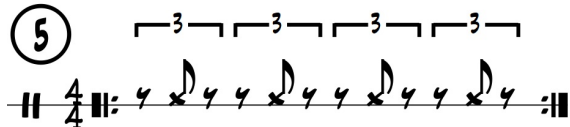
3. Sixteenth-note offbeat: the second ("e")

④



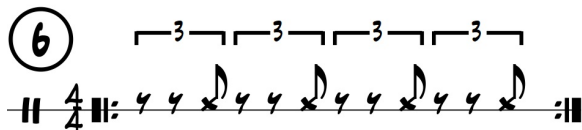
4. Sixteenth-note offbeat: the fourth ("ah")

⑤



5. Second eighth-note triplet partial

⑥



6. Third eighth-note triplet partial

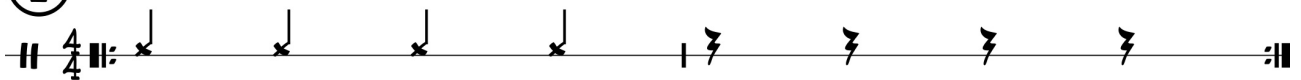
The purpose of the exercises above is to make your downbeats stronger and more confident.

DISAPPEARING CLICK

Practice along a programmed click track, according to the following guidelines:

1. **2-bar** form: 1 bar with click / 1 bar without
2. **3-bar** form: 1 bar with click / 2 bars without
3. **4-bar** form: 1 bar with click / 3 bars without

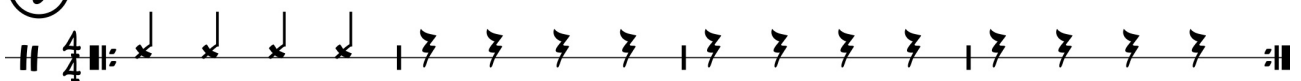
①



②



③



Be patient, and have fun!!

Conclusions

We've come to the end of this short companion in studies.

I would like to point out that these are just a few, common basic exercises that have been around for a while and recommended by many educators around the world: you can expand their range by incorporating polyrhythms, for example. To further your search, I'm adding below just a short list of recommended sources on rhythm concepts & independence:

DVDs

- Benny Greb: "The Language Of Drumming" / "The Art And Science Of Groove"
- Thomas Lang: "Creative Coordination"

Books

- Benny Greb: "The Language Of Drumming Book"
- Gary Chaffee: "Patterns" series
- Peter Erskine: "Time Awareness - For All Musicians"
- Todd Isler: "You Can Ta Ka Di Mi This!"

Web

- Drumeo (Official Website): <http://www.drumeo.com>
- Drumeo (Official YouTube Channel): <http://www.youtube.com/freedrumlessons>
- Sabian Education Network: <http://sabianed.com>

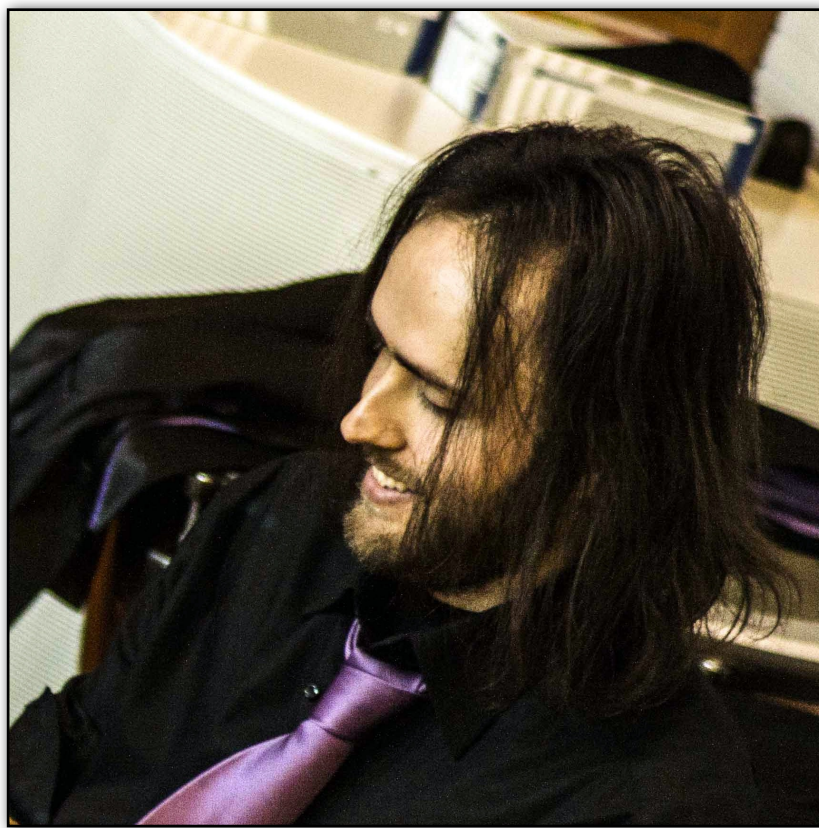
Closing I would like to thank my family & my dear ones for always be supporting and allowing me to share my gifts. I love you!

My best wishes for pursuing your drum journey, may it become a musical journey!

Blessings,

Gianpaolo

About the Author



Gianpaolo Gallian started drumming at the age of 9. He soon began studying Percussion Instruments at the Conservatory of Music in Rovigo (IT), which he attended for 8 years. After that, he switched to private drum studies, attending seminars and drum events. He came back to academical studies in 2009, graduating *cum laude* in Jazz Musical Disciplines (BD). As a drummer, he has played in many different musical situation, from *Top 40* to contemporary jazz-fusion to contemporary pop-rock, touring around Italy and Europe, while recording as a session player for some studios, and teaching privately. He currently teaches privately and studies for his Master's Degree in Jazz Musical Disciplines. He authored the books "Drumset in Mathematics - An Invaluable Companion in Studies", "Drumset in Mathematics - The Applications" & "Time Awareness - Vol. 1 | Go-Everywhere Exercises to Improve Your Sense of Time", available on Scribd.com.

For more information, please visit the author's website at

<http://gianpaologallian.blogspot.com/>.